

Safe travel on school transport

Guidelines for taxi escorts

This guide has been produced to help taxi companies provide high quality escorted Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Adult Social Care (ASC) contracts for the Council (LCC).

Role of the escort

LCC considers that the role of a transport escort is important in reassuring and assisting passengers.

This is achieved through a professional and consistent approach to meeting passengers' needs – which is invariably easier to manage if the same escort accompanies the same passengers on each escorted journey.

Escort requirements

Escorts must have a good level of conversational English and be able to communicate with schools and parents.

Escorts must be fit enough to manage the physical aspects of the escort role.

Maintaining consistency

Many SEN and ASC service users have special needs which mean that they find it difficult to cope with change and unfamiliarity with an escort can result in distress at the start of the day, which in turn can lead to an unproductive day in school.

For these reasons, we cannot accept a situation where escorts are rotated around contracts at frequent intervals and the passenger does not know who to expect as escort.

We expect 2 or 3 escorts at most to be used on any contract and an opportunity should be provided for parents to 'meet and greet' all the escorts on SEN contracts.

Where a new escort has to be used e.g. if an existing escort leaves, it should not be before an introductory meeting with parents/carers.

2 or 3 escorts may be rotated on a consistent basis e.g. one escort in the morning, another in the afternoon or changed at regular pre-planned intervals such as every 2 weeks or month.

Where escorts are used on this basis, it is helpful if parents/carers know the regular pattern so that they can help to prepare their children in advance;

For unescorted SEN or ASC contracts, similar considerations to the above should apply to the use of regular drivers.

Timekeeping

Operators should note the importance of timekeeping (recognising that variations in traffic conditions can cause difficulty) and noted that earlier than expected pick-ups can cause as many problems as lateness.

Information on service user needs

We provide as much information to you about a passenger's special needs as we know but recognise that sometimes additional needs may only become clear after the contract has started.

Regular feedback from taxi staff and LCC is therefore vital.

Contact visits and Confidentiality

In respect of children who have contact visits, operators are reminded that these children must be handed over to a badged social worker or other recognised employee and not left alone with a parent/carer.

At no point should information about the child (especially address) be shared with anyone other than the driver's manager and Council representatives.

Code of conduct

Escorts should conduct themselves professionally at all times. Specifically escorts will:

- wear appropriate clothing and be presentable at all times
- ensure that their actions do not expose any person to any Health and Safety risks.
- not engage in personal e-mail, telephone, text or social media contact with children.

Guideline leaflets in this series

This leaflet aims to give advice and information to Taxi companies and their escorting staff who deliver transport services on behalf of Leicestershire County Council.

Other leaflets in this series, available on request, include:

- Anti-social behaviour on school transport
- School Bus Passes: Frequently asked questions
- Guidelines for drivers
- Guidelines for school staff
- Guidelines for parents and students on mainstream transport
- Guidelines for parents – Special Educational Needs transport
- Guidelines of safe working practice for the protection of children and staff
- Guidelines for severe weather conditions - Operators
- Guidelines for severe weather conditions – Schools

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the services it relates to or if you require information contained in this leaflet in an alternative version, e.g. large print, Braille, tape or an alternative language please telephone:

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